

NETWORK TELEPHONE SYSTEM AND METHODS THEREFOR

ABSTRACT

One embodiment of the present invention includes a telephony interface, a network interface and a local area network (LAN). The telephony interface provides connectivity between one or more netphones and an external telephone network such as a PSTN telephone system. The network interface provides connectivity between one or more computers and an external computer network such as the Internet. The local area network provides interconnectivity between the netphone(s), the computer(s), the telephony interface and the network interface. In some embodiments, there may be two or more netphones which can communicate with each other internally via the LAN, in addition to communicating with the external telephone network. Similarly, there may be two or more computers that can also communicate with each other internally via the same LAN, in addition to the external computer network. By combining both the internal and external connectivity needs of both the netphone(s) and computer(s), the entry cost of installing both the netphone(s) and the computer(s) is dramatically lowered. In addition, once the network infrastructure has been installed, the existing netphone(s) and computer(s) can be very easily relocated within the network, and new netphone(s) and computer(s) can be added to the network with minimal changes to the network.